

The Pembleton three-wheeler costs from £26,394



GUY GREGORY

PEMBLETON MOTOR COMPANY, PEMBLETON.CO.UK

Twenty miles from Tempest of England, in the picturesque Worcestershire village of Bayton, is Pembleton Motor Company. Like all the best men-in-shed businesses, it's almost impossible to find without spoken directions.

It's the home of the Pembleton, a cycle car designed by former national hill climb champion Phil Gregory, who was inspired by pre-war cycle cars and vintage motorcycles. Whisper it, but to the uneducated it looks like a Morgan 3 Wheeler, right down to its front-mounted V-twin engine.

The first car was based around Citroën 2CV mechanicals and completed in 1999. Called the Pembleton Supersport, it was joined later by a four-wheeler called the Brooklands. Phil went on to sell almost 500 cars in kit form.

Four years ago his son Guy, then aged 20, joined the business. A new vision for the company formed in his mind, with the result that, 18 months ago, he hatched a plan to refresh the Pembleton's design and build only complete cars. That suited Phil, who handed Guy the reins of the business to become the

company's specialist fabricator for a few days a week.

Unlike Joe Mason's jungle of a shed, Guy's stone-built affair is more modest and tidier but no less fascinating. Two well-ordered production rooms are dotted with strategically placed tool chests, lathes and work benches and dominated by a handful of part-built and completed Pembletons.

Guy introduces me to the crew. First up is Johnny, a qualified mechanical engineer tasked with turning Guy's vision into technical reality. Then there's →

← Sam, an historic racing driver at weekends, who is responsible for the car's exquisite technical detailing, including the beautifully constructed rear disc brake arrangement and perfectly machined rose joints on the gearchange linkage, and for adapting the car's 750cc Moto Guzzi V-twin engine. He also assembles the Pembleton's finely shaped and finished bodywork.

Last but not least is Guy, who looks after marketing, oversees the build schedule and, crucially, liaises with suppliers.

"Apart from the engine, most of our parts are locally sourced, and the remainder come from elsewhere in the UK," he says.

There are always three Pembletons in production and each one takes six to eight weeks to build. It sounds like a logistical nightmare but Guy has it under control. "To avoid things grinding to a stop, we carry every part in stock," he says.

The three cars presently in production are sold. On-the-road

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prices start at £26,394 and each car is tested for motorcycle single vehicle type approval. One of them, its bright red leather contrasting with the polished alloy and copper bodywork, catches my eye.

"It's going to Marbella," says Guy.

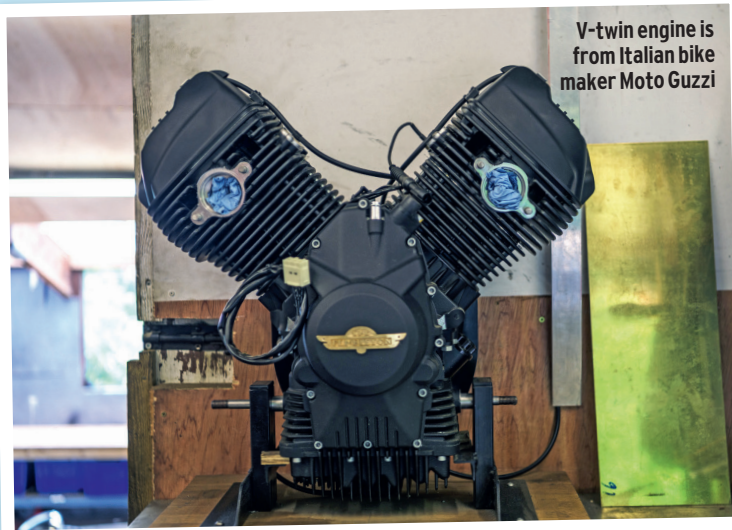
I can imagine it turning heads on the town's Golden Mile, but now it's time to turn a few heads in Bayton. I step over the side of the Pembleton demonstrator and drop down into the dark leather bench seat. A turn of the key, a stab of the starter button and the Guzzi V-twin springs into life with a rich bark from its exhausts.

The gearchange is a dash-mounted push-pull affair whose unfamiliar operation takes most of my attention. Fortunately the



Guy Gregory (left) shows Evans around

engine's torque helps mask my poor selections. Steering is light and precise, springing soft and comfortable, but most surprising of all, the single rear wheel doesn't feel remotely strange. I blat around for pictures, growing in confidence by the second. Days were made for drives like this.



V-twin engine is from Italian bike maker Moto Guzzi



It's torque, steers well and doesn't want for a fourth wheel